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B R I E F

To

THE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

On

CERTAIN ASPECTS OF THE CAMERON COMMISSION REPORT

By

The Alberta Teachers' Association

Barnett House
Edmonton

August 5th, 1960.

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To

THE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

ON

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F O R E W O R D

The Alberta Teachers' Association, through its Curriculum Committee, has been studying the Cameron Commission Report. Recommendations of this report which have received attention are numbers 5, 6, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 24, 29, 30, 131, 133, 134, 136, 141, 142, 143, 144, 145, 146, 274, 275, 276, 277, and 279. These recommendations were endorsed in principle and supported, with minor modifications, in resolutions C30/60 to C42/60, at the Annual General Meeting of the Association in 1960. The brief herewith presented submits the substance of these resolutions and urges the acceptance and implementation of the action suggested.

TEACHER EDUCATION

There are two aspects of teacher education: preservice and inservice. Dealing with the first, it has long been the view of the Association that entrance into teacher education in Alberta should be equivalent to entrance into other Faculties, and that proper professional preparation requires four years.

We believe that a timetable which will eliminate progressively the lower entrance requirements of the Junior Elementary program and the one year nature of the program itself should be adopted. The time is ripe for such a program. The school population is increasing each year by about 14,000 students as indicated by the total enrolment for the last six years starting with 1953-54 (1953-54 - 201,420; 1954-55 - 212,705; 1955-56 - 223,949; 1956-57 - 234,397; 1957-58 - 247,219; 1958-59 - 261,554). The corresponding requirement of the teaching force is also increasing. (For the same years the numbers in the teaching force were: 1953-54 - 7,455; 1954-55 - 8,274; 1955-56 - 8,815; 1956-57 - 9,273

; 1957-58 - 9,970; 1958-59 - 10,855.) Recently, the number of matriculants has increased more rapidly than either of these two. In the summer of 1959 there were 2,100 matriculants. It is reported that the number of papers in English and Social Studies is 16 percent higher than anticipated this year and is close to 9,000 for each subject. Therefore, the available pool of matriculants is rapidly increasing. At the same time, the high level of unemployment and the widely publicized difficulties in securing employment at the end of professional training in certain competing walks of life tend to entice more matriculants to enter teaching. The fact is that actual enrolment in the first year of the B.Ed. is increasing very markedly. For the same years, 1953-54 to the present, the enrolments were: 1953-54 - 169; 1954-55 - 139; 1955-56 - 189; 1956-57 - 150; 1957-58 - 197; 1958-59 - 295; and for 1959-60 - 469 . For these reasons, we believe that the time is ripe to continue a yearly program whereby in the year 1961-62 matriculation is required for entrance into the Junior E and in the year 1962-63 the Faculty of Education should provide a double track for certification. One of these would be the present possibility of certification at the

end of two years. The second would be the reinstitution on an elective basis of a four-year certification program.

We have welcomed the TEASEL study by the Faculty of Education and wholeheartedly support any effort to include factors such as proficiency in oral and written English, physical and mental health, character and personality, in the screening for teachers. If The University Act does not permit the exclusion of undesirable candidates, these could at least be warned in advance that they might not be recommended for certification. We recognize that some mistakes are bound to be made in any selection program but we believe that the number will be small and the benefits accruing to the teaching profession both in quantity and quality of candidates will be great. We recommend that selection procedures be introduced in 1962-63. One of the factors which should be considered is the appraisal of the principal, and of Cooperating Teachers.

It is our belief that the quality of teacher education in the preparation of beginning teachers is largely dependent on the quality of the practice

teaching experiences. We submit that the present practice teaching which amounts, in fact, to between eighteen and twenty-two days, is wholly inadequate. We would like to see the extension of internship along the line advocated by Mr. Aubrey Earl in his paper at the Western Canada Conference on Teacher Education. We hope to elaborate our views on this matter later.

Inservice education is the second aspect of teacher education with which the Alberta Teacher's Association is concerned. We define this as any organized effort to assist teachers to improve instruction and keep abreast of the latest educational developments while in service. Formal courses taken at summer session or as evening credit we regard as pre-service education. Lately, we have been making a number of innovations in the area of professional development because we believe that we have the major responsibility to encourage and organize this area. These innovations can be summarized as follows:

1. Consultative assistance for local associations, sub-locals and school staffs in various professional development activities.
2. Professional development consultants to assist teacher groups, to organize, to conduct and to evaluate educational studies, to assist action research projects, and similar in-service activities.
3. Two series of monographs - one of the Improvement of Instruction and the second on Problems in Education - have been published to assist teachers.
4. Specialist councils are being established to improve knowledge and understanding of members in the specialty.
5. Eleven scholarships and a fellowship are offered to teachers and education students continuing their professional education.
6. Interest free loans are provided to a maximum of \$800 to Alberta teachers who wish to attend the winter session.
7. A model induction ceremony and induction materials have been prepared for the use of local associations for presentation to new members.

8. Public relations activities such as sponsoring the official opening of Education week, a vocations folder for distribution to high school students, a leaflet entitled "A Career in Teaching" available to interested persons, and the quarterly public relations bulletin containing information and suggestions for conducting public relations and education programs at the local level, have been incorporated with other professional development activities.
9. A revised Banff Conference.
10. Alternate plans to provide better library service.

It is our view that one of the major responsibilities of our organization is the improvement of the quality of teaching. We believe that there is plenty of research evidence to show that when teachers are involved in planning and decision making it is likely to affect their classroom practice. On the other hand, experience has shown that edicts from what teachers regard as external authority have limited effect on what actually takes place in classrooms. For these reasons,

we have, as indicated above, been urging our local groups to study certain educational problems. In this connection, it should be emphasized that we are not asking such local groups to embark on the development of courses of study. Rather, we are attempting to encourage action research projects within the framework of the present courses of study. It is our belief that when proposed changes are contemplated in courses of studies the teachers should be notified early. It is probably difficult, if not impossible, for the Department of Education to do this. Because of past experience, any document from the Department of Education is regarded by teachers as an authoritative pronouncement. Therefore, the Department is unable to make a statement until the matter is finalized. Our Association is not in this position and we believe that we can make a very useful contribution to education in the province by providing to the educators of the province some views which we hope will be sound but which will be non-authoritative on any proposed changes in school matters. It will be noted that our offer to publicize material on accreditation fits in with this concept of our role. It will be noted also that our series on the

Improvement of Instruction and our series on Problems in Education are further examples of the application of this concept.

The last annual meeting of the Association authorized specialist councils and the Executive Council of the Association has agreed to subsidize these councils with a flat grant, by provision of a speaker at an annual conference, and by publication and dissemination of materials to their members. Membership in these councils was deliberately made open to professional personnel of the Department of Education and the University of Alberta. The objects of the councils are to improve the members' skill and knowledge in the specialty. The constitution of the councils specifically indicates that their channel of approach to the Department, to the Faculty, or any other authoritative body in education is through the regular channels of the Alberta Teachers' Association.

We have now applications for specialist councils in English, Social Studies, Mathematics, Science, Foreign Languages, and for a principals' council. It is our hope that these specialist councils may

meet on a provincewide scale, perhaps at Easter time, for a two or three-day conference and that the teachers who so meet will provide leadership in their specialty and will be stimulated to act as a ferment to all teachers of this specialty. We request the encouragement and support of Department officials for these specialist councils. We hope that the specialist councils will organize regional councils. The assistance and encouragement of Departmental superintendents in this matter would be welcome.

We have lately been studying our teachers' conventions as one aspect of inservice education. Both last year and this we made special efforts to assist convention committees in the selection of personnel appropriate to the theme or topic of the convention. We have been studying convention size and have come to the conclusion that it is not the size of the convention which determines the success of the program as much as it is the facilities available. For example, the Lethbridge convention has available some half dozen schools within a radius of one quarter mile. This convention, with 900 teachers, is very successful in using

small group techniques and can provide a varied program. On the other hand, Calgary rural convention held in the provincial auditorium and serving 1,100 teachers is restricted to a non-participating type of program. It is our view that because of this restriction on space some of the larger conventions should be broken into smaller groups.

Lately there has been some grumbling in the Southam Press newspapers about "teachers' convention holidays". It is our view from which we will not retreat that teachers along with all other professions need a periodic refresher. It is our view that the interest and attendance of teachers at conventions is at least equal to, if not superior to, that of other professionals. It is our view that the loss of two days schooling because of convention is more than made up by the improvement in the teachers' performance because of conventions. It is our view that the public outcry calling for increased length of schooling is a passing phase. If, however, this were not so, we would be prepared to study the possibility of teachers' conventions being held on two days, one of which is a Friday and one

a Saturday. This would tend, of course, to spread our conventions over a longer period of time or, alternatively, to have more overlapping of conventions than at present. We would be pleased to hear the views of those present on this matter.

CURRICULUM

It is the view of the Association that the function of the General Curriculum Committee should be to advise the Minister on the aims and objectives of education. This could be accomplished by posing broad questions for the consideration of the General Curriculum Committee. Even if it could reach no uniform agreement, the record of the discussion would provide a sounding board on the aims and objectives of education. The kind of broad questions which could be posed would be such as the following:

1. Are our composite high schools offering a sufficient variety of non-academic courses?
2. Is there a need for extended technical education (vocational as opposed to exploratory)?
3. Is the Community College a feasible idea?
4. Should the schools attempt to lengthen the school day and the school year?
5. Should guidance services be extended in the secondary schools?

The answers to these and similar questions may not be definitive but the discussion of the General Curriculum

Committee, representative as it is, should provide some excellent leads for the Minister and the Department.

It is the view of the Association that curriculum outlines should separate the prescribed content from method. It is sometimes claimed that content and method cannot be separated. The Association does not subscribe to this view. The inseparables are method and objectives. As long as the objectives and the content are specified in course outlines, it is unnecessary to specify the method except for nonprofessional teachers who have not had sufficient training to realize what methods are required in a given content to attain certain objectives. Our Association subscribes to the view that instruction in method is a prerogative of teacher education when teacher education is understood to include preservice and inservice education. We feel that attempts to prescribe method in effect are attempts to make teachers technicians. Such attempts have been caused by practices which permitted nonprofessionals into the classroom. Neither of these practices should be continued.

Our Association further subscribes to the Commission view that suggestions on method can be made

by the Department, provided they are suggestive only and are not found in official courses of study.

The making of courses of studies is a highly complex procedure and is recognized as such by our Association. It is our belief that there should be more teachers on the curriculum committees. We are concerned that teachers selected by the Department of Education on subcommittees at times support proposals which are not endorsed by the majority of their colleagues. If this continues, the Association will have to take some steps to make sure that the opinions presented by teacher members of subcommittees reflect in some manner the views of teachers as a whole or else that it be clearly recognized that these views are individual only and cannot be thought of as representing the views of teachers.

It is the view of the Association that even in school systems which have composite high schools there is no adequate provision for a non-academic student in the present organization and practices of schools. We are convinced that there should be an

extension of pre-employment terminal programs of the kind tried out by the Edmonton Separate School system and by the Clover Bar School Division.

ACCREDITATION

The Alberta Teachers' Association is conscious of the fact that accreditation as proposed in the Alberta Royal Commission report on education is different from accreditation as it is generally recognized elsewhere. In general, accredited schools elsewhere are relieved from external examinations. This is not the concept for Alberta schools. We therefore recognize a unique and limited usage of the term "accreditation" for Alberta schools.

It is our view that the criteria for accreditation can constitute an extremely important incentive for the improvement of schools or school systems by their controlling school boards. This would require that the criteria be as objective as possible, be related to educational excellence, and be not so simple that all or nearly all schools can automatically qualify nor so difficult that very few, if any, schools can qualify.

The privileges to be granted to accredited schools is the second area of concern in this topic. The privileges should motivate school boards and the pub-

lic to want accredited schools. It may be that the prestige of the term itself will do the motivating regardless of the actual privileges conferred. This is a matter for speculation.

In order to pursue the matter of accreditation, the Alberta Teachers' Association has set up an ad hoc committee on accreditation consisting of the following:

R.F. Staples, Principal, Westlock High School,
Westlock
Miss E.W. Duff, Teacher, Crescent Heights High
School, Calgary
S.G. Deane, Principal East Glen Composite High
School, Edmonton
D.C. Dandell, Principal Lindsay-Thurber Composite
High School, Red Deer
G.S. Grant, Principal, Medicine Hat High School,
Medicine Hat
A.E. Henderson, Principal, Ross Sheppard Composite
High School, Edmonton
G. Zytaruk, Principal, Athabasca School, Athabasca.
W.A. Kujath, Principal, Grande Prairie School,
Grande Prairie
W.H. Cooper, Principal, Crescent Heights High
School, Calgary
E. Bardock, submitted M.Ed. thesis on accreditat-
ion, May 1960
Dr. S.C.T. Clarke, Executive Secretary, Alberta
Teachers' Association

This committee has not yet met but already the Associat-
ion has been collecting materials which might assist the
committee in considering the two problems mentioned

above. The materials sent out to committee members include:

Accreditation Deserves Our Full Support (Editorial - Utah Educational Review May 1960)

Accreditation - Secondary Schools (Encyclopedia of Educational Research, Third Edition)

A Proposal for Implementing the Greater Local Autonomy Recommended by the Royal Commission on Education - A.B. Henderson

Accrediting of High Schools (Revised, 1958) - Department of Education, Province of British Columbia
Promotions, General Course - Grade XI to Grade XII (Manitoba)

Letter - M.M. Evans, Registrar, Department of Education, British Columbia

Letter Re Accrediting to High School Principals - Department of Education, British Columbia

Accreditation of Schools - Department of Education, Alberta

It is the view of our organization that accreditation is potentially so important that it is a matter which should be studied throughout the province. Alberta has had some sad experiences with the hasty imposition of new practices and procedures on the schools. It is our view that if accreditation is widely studied, particularly by administrative personnel, that it is much more likely to be an improving force in education.

For the above reasons we respectfully submit that we would like to have our organization represented

on any committee which finally and authoritatively determines the criteria for accreditation and the privileges to be granted to accredited schools and the procedures for performing accreditation.

We would further recommend that if a monograph could be prepared and distributed to school principals it would be useful at the present stage. It is our belief that Dr. R.E. Rees, secretary on the Royal Commission on education is well informed in this area and could prepare a useful and informative monograph. On our part, were such a monograph forthcoming, we might well publish and distribute it.

We consider that it could be distributed to superintendents, principals, school boards and to selected persons in the Department of Education, Faculty of Education, and home and school associations.

It is the earnest desire of the Alberta Teachers' Association to cooperate with the Department of Education in this matter and we would welcome the reaction of the Department to the above suggestions.

RESEARCH

Teaching is generally regarded as being partly an art and partly a science. The future of educational progress, we believe, lies in increasing the scientific portion of education. Research is the instrument for doing this.

The annual expenditure on education including government grants and board expenditures is approximately ninety million dollars. Business and industry annually spend large sums of money on research, presumably because this pays them dividends in profits. It is our belief that research in education will fundamentally be equally profitable. If even as little as one tenth of one percent of total expenditures on education were devoted to educational research, this would be ninety thousand dollars per year. It is our belief that the amount devoted to educational research annually should be approximately two tenths of one percent of total expenditure on education.

There are different levels of research and different areas of appropriateness. Basic research into

theory of learning, learning processes, the sociology and the psychology of classroom and community groups, and the like, properly resides in universities and with university disciplines. At the other extreme, research initiated and designed to immediately modify practice may best be carried on by the practitioners. We do not believe that it is possible to develop more than guidelines regarding the appropriate bodies which should carry on research. It has been argued that the Department of Education should not carry on research because being a governmental body it is subject to the possibility of concealment of unpalatable findings. On the other hand, any research which makes provincewide or areawide comparisons of school standards, examination results and the like, can best be done by the Department of Education. It may be argued that such groups as the trustees' association and the teachers' association, because of special interest, should not carry on research. However, there are certain kinds of research best done by such bodies. One example is readership surveys of their own publications. Another example would be the attitude of teachers toward the training

program which they received. Another example would be the adequacy of the preparation of administrators. It is also obvious that certain interested groups may jointly study a problem. A recent example of this is the teacher housing study being jointly conducted by the Department, the trustees and the teachers.

Regardless of the foregoing, it is our belief that a large amount of needed research will never be done unless by full time research personnel, preferably employed by and housed in the university. It is further our belief that there exists a large number of important research projects which should be done. Decisions are being made in the absence of relevant data. A list of research projects prepared sometime ago by the Alberta Advisory Committee on Educational Research will indicate some of the possible research topics. (See list pages 5 and 6.)

It is our belief that because of the joint interest of the Department, trustees, teachers, home and school and the university in the broad area of research, that the original concept of the Alberta Advisory Comm-

ittee on Education Research was sound and that it is in the development of this body that the future of educational research lies. This body is able to supply ideas on needed research to the appropriate personnel. This body is best able to get researchers into the field. This body is best able to get teachers, administrators and trustees conscious of the scientific aspect of educational research.

We urge the Department of Education to increase its grant to the A.A.C.E.R. We would recommend a graduated increasing scale of Department of Education contributions to the A.A.C.E.R. For example, the amount for the 1961-62 term might be \$10,000 and increasing by \$10,000 per year thereafter until it reaches the proportions already indicated.

The organization for research is currently undergoing revision. The fact that the appropriation of funds would be an annual one is of itself sufficient to ensure that the government should be satisfied with its mode of expenditure.

LIST OF SUGGESTED PROJECTS

1. Teacher Recruitment: the contribution of each division, county or district to the provincial pool of teachers.
2. Selection of Prospective Teachers: a study of the academic record, physique, emotional qualities, health, and personal qualities of trainees; the relation of these factors to retention.
3. Has the county form of government made any significant contribution in facilitating education in rural Alberta?
4. Acceleration and Retardation in Alberta Schools: a factual survey of retardation and acceleration and its relation to promotion policies.
5. The Development of Alberta Achievement Tests: the sponsorship of achievement tests in reading, language and arithmetic for Alberta elementary schools, Grades 1 to 6: standardization based on Alberta children; development of Alberta norms.
6. A Periodic Comparison of Achievement in Reading, Writing and Arithmetic at Five Year Intervals: a study designed to provide periodically the answer to the question - Are our schools doing as efficient a job as they were doing 5, 10 or 15 years ago?
7. Are local school boards in divisions and counties performing a useful function? To what extent are they functioning? Has the attempt to reorganize local boards under the provisions of Section 84(a) of The School Act been successful? Are there any alternatives to local boards, a way of maintaining local interest in education?
8. A Study of the Library Facilities and Resources of the Major Schools in Each Division in Alberta.

9. The Effectiveness of our Composite High Schools: Are the students receiving programs suited to their interests and to their ultimate employment?
10. Drop-Out Rates and Reasons for Drop-Outs: a study of why students leave school in junior and senior high school; percentage of drop-outs in each grade; reasons for drop-outs; subsequent employment of drop-outs.
11. An Analysis of Teacher Activity: a job analysis approach to the activities of teachers in the classroom; the percentage of time devoted to teaching, group activity, remedial instruction, and other activities.
12. Objectives of High School Programs in Industrial Arts, Commercial Work, Home Economics, General Courses, Matriculation Courses: How successfully are these objectives being attained?
13. How adequate is the present system of provincial aid in equalizing the costs of education?
14. The Effectiveness of the Guidance Program in the Senior High School.
15. Individual Differences in School Children; their nature; how they are being treated; the success of our procedures in treatment of individual differences.
16. Problems of Adolescents in an Alberta Town.
17. What is the role of the supervising principal?

STANDARDS, STATISTICS AND EXAMINATIONS

The Alberta Teachers' Association endorses the Cameron Commission recommendation of a Bureau of Tests and Standards to be established by the Department of Education. As seen by our Association, such a bureau would have two major functions: tests and statistics.

Alberta sorely needs a source to provide suitable tests. The task involved is largely selecting suitable tests from those presently available and, in some instances, modifying or adapting to local curricula certain items. Beyond this, the major task would be to develop Alberta norms for these tests. The norming of such tests is obviously a way of determining standards and any possible change in standards and would serve to provide information which could protect the schools against the public outcry that standards are being "watered down".

At the same time, this Bureau of Tests and Standards could control and stabilize the Grade IX and Grade XII examinations by using items of known difficulty and by other means. The effect of the Grade IX and Grade XII examinations on school practice and on university entr-

ance could be a subject of continuous study. We urge the Department of Education to establish a Bureau of Tests and Standards to so deal with tests.

The statistics we have in mind have to do with schools, pupils, and examinations. At present nobody knows the holding power of Alberta schools. Even the Cameron Commission failed to provide a definitive answer in this matter. What is needed here are cohort studies coupled with a modification of our record taking to be similar to that required in Nova Scotia. Nobody knows the failure rate in our schools below the Grade IX level. Nobody knows the amount of acceleration, retardation and streaming which is carried on in Alberta schools. These pupil personnel practices have a tremendous impact on the excellence of a school system and, on a provincial level, as on district levels, educators are in ignorance of what is being done.

It is not suggested that a Bureau of Tests and Standards would supplant local endeavours in either of these areas. One of its functions would be to encourage and coordinate such local efforts.

CENTRAL REGISTRY FOR TEACHERS

The Cameron Commission, in its teacher force study, demonstrated the lack of current information on the teaching body and the possibility of securing such information. Basic knowledge of the facts of age, sex, marital status and years of teacher education of the teaching force are vital in planning for the needs of education in the province. In addition, the experience of teachers, their placement, their record of employment, and their salary, would be useful information in considering educational excellence.

One of the problems in material collected from teachers is the possibility of duplication and overlap. Until recently, teachers have been asked to fill out some six duplicate forms. Information is needed by the Dominion Bureau of Statistics, the Registrar of the Department of Education, the Superintendent and the Secretary-Treasurer of the school district or division, our own office and the Secretary of the Local A.T.A. It would be desirable to request that only one form be filled out. It would also be desirable that the material

be placed on punched cards. If this were done, then any group which wished could have information, could secure the answer to specific questions, or could secure a duplicate set of cards.

Our Association is of the view that the Central Registry for Teachers could well be our function. We would be pleased to hear the views of persons present on this proposal.

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